

[Rufus H. Dunnahoo]

Redfield Georgia B.

3-19-37. 670 words INTERVIEW

Rufus M. Dunnahoo

(Age Eighty-eight Years) Oldest Roswell Pioneer

"My parents were [B. P?] and Katherine Atkinson Dunnahoo. I am eighty-eight years old, was born in Mississippi on Washington's birthday - February 22, 1849. Old Home of Captain Jason W. James

"Yes this is the old home of Captain Jason W. James and family. They lived here in 1893-94. That is Pat Garretts' old home up the road a couple hundred yards east. We have a picture of Pat Garrett and John W. Poe, taken about the time Pat Garrett killed Billy the Kid in 1881.

I live here with my daughter Sally [Chewning?] and her husband Henry [Chewning?].
Arrived in New Mexico 1880

"I left San Antonio, Texas in a two horse covered wagon and arrived in New Mexico in July, 1880.

"Judge Asbury C. Rogers the first school teacher in this district was one of the men who came in our outfit.

"At Pecos, Texas we struck a Caravan of immigrants, with sixteen covered wagons and a bunch of cattle. My brother-in-law George Danner and I went over from our camp near them and talked with them. They were quarreling and complaining,. They were

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discouraged because the grazing for the cattle was all burned up because of long drouth. The cattle had gotten weak and poor from lack of water and food. They wanted to turn back. C[18 - 65/?] N. Mex. 2 Brought Cattle to New Mexico

I made them a proposition, and they took me up on it to bring their stock thro'ugh to Seven Rivers for them.

"I got thro'ugh with them all right.

Geronimo's Band Indians Stole Teams Horses.

"We hadn't been at Seven Rivers long when Geronimo's Apaches came and stole all the teams-32head of their horses.

"I bought the old Beckwith Ranche and had my horses in a five foot high and two foot thick, adobe corral, near the house so the Indians didn't get mine. Indians Disappeared in Cave

Another time Geronimo and sixteen other Indians broke out of the Mescalero Reservation one day, and the soldiers after them tho'ught they had them safe in a cave about two and a half miles east, a little north of Fort Stanton, two hundred yards from the Bonito River. The soldiers tho'ught to starve the Indians out, but the Indians never came back, so the soldiers tracked them thro'ugh the cave down a river about 14 miles.

The Indians went thro'ugh the cave to south side of Capitan Mountains and stole a bunch of horses and drove them on down this far,. They camped right where the New Mexico Military Institute is located now. I think Pat Garrett and a posse captured the Indians over in the Portales country.

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"The cave tho'se Indians and soldiers went in is not as large or as beautiful as Carlsbad Caverns. There is one big room. An underground river flows thro'ugh all of the cave. 3
Blacksmith Shop in Seven Rivers

"I opened a blacksmith shop in Seven Rivers. While we were living there, seven wagons of us were going over to Las Vegas. When we got to the Hondo River-right at the entrance of Roswell we found the river was up and there wasn't any bridge. Helped by Captain Joseph C. Lea

"Captain Joseph C. Lea and Buck [Ooice?] came to us on horseback. Captain Lea said he had some vigas (large beans) and he would give us some to make a crossing with. He brought us three. We cut some little underbrush and put across the vigas and managed to cross. When we came back from Las Vegas the river was down but our bridge was still there.

"Captain Leas strengthened it and kept it up three years for there was lots of traveling thro'ugh here then to Silver City and to White Oaks during the gold seekers rush during the seventies and early eighties.

Opened Black-smith Shop Roswell 1881

"In 1881 I opened a black-smith shop in Roswell right where the Green Lantern is located now on the corner of Fourth and Main streets.

"When I moved to Roswell Captain and Mrs. Lea has a boy and girl-Wildy and Elinor. My wife and I had three children a boy-George Dunnahoo and two girls Ruth and Maude.
Named for Mrs. Joseph C. Lea

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"My daughter, Mrs. Henry Chewning, the one I live here with was born after we moved to Roswell. We named her Sally for Captain Lea's wife Sally Wildy Lea.

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Played Violin-John Chisum Home Christmas Night 1880

I was a musician and played for all the first dances and parties given in this part of the country.

"In 1880 I played Violin and Will Lumbley played the banjo, for the Christmas party at the John Chisum Rancho at South Spring-six miles south of Roswell.

"Miss Sallie Chisum and John Chisum liked to have young people come for parties on holidays.

"Their house was a big eight or nine room adobe built around a patio. There was a fine dining room and a table long enough to seat all the settlers that lived in this district, at that time. Every body was welcome at the Chisum Rancho and they had good times there.

"Round dances-the old-time waltz-and quadrilles, or square dances were danced in tho'se days.

Hunted Buffalo Antelope and Deer.

"I was considered a good buffalo hunter, I like hunting. When we sighted a bunch of buffalo we tried to get so the wind blew from them so they couldn't scent us, they were awful wild and quick getting away. I guess I killed more antelope and deer then any man in New Mexico.

"Since Jim Miller died two years ago I am the oldest old-timer here. He was two years older than I. We were good friends-sorter 5 like brothers. I don't think either of us had an enemy.

I miss him. He was a good man."

Given In Interview By: Rufus H. Dunnahoo, 3-16-37.

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P. O. Roswell, New Mexico.